

THE HELPDESK REVOLUTION

As a Help Desk practitioner for over 16 years I have seen the world of helpdesk mushroom from a nice to have to a necessary prerequisite of an IT Department. In those years we may have expected to see many changes and although this may be true in the market of Call Management SW and the applications we so earnestly support there has been little change in the fundamentals of the Helpdesk.

There are STILL too many IT requests/faults and few good helpdesk staff. Those that do exist are often undervalued and poorly motivated although, it must be said, not badly paid.

The root cause of problems logged is still similar – user error, poor install, inadequate hardware, lack of customer training. The customer frustrations are also still the same, being held in queues for phone call to be answered, being thrown around different departments and feeling like help requests have gone into a black hole.

Technology has improved with automated email, call logging via the net, CTI, remote access tools etc which, in theory, should allow us to improve the delivery of services to our customers but without the right staff to use these tools they become an IT White Elephant.

To use a well worn phrase “staff are our greatest asset!!” So how are they treated? Very often perceived as the “wannabe” support people, not allowed to reset passwords just in case they mess it up, many Helpdesk Analysts are not offered any training, seen as whingers as they are often reiterating customer issues back to senior management. Often the location of the helpdesk, in the depths of the basement devoid of natural daylight and fresh air, signals how this essential service provision is perceived as a necessary evil.

So what are we doing about it? Throughout my years as a Helpdesk Call Logger through to Supervisor, Manager and Consultant I have had a lot to say about the Industry and its faults. Now in my position as Service Director of Magicale I am at last in a position to influence the industry to raise up a new breed of Helpdesk Staff who are fully motivated not only but money but by training, qualifications and careers. It is with this in mind and with the backing of other industry influencers that I am launching a Helpdesk Revolution and ask you to join. If you view yourself as a professional Helpdesk person with very little forum now is your chance to express yourself. Let me know of any issues you would like to be debated/highlighted regarding our industry and we will start up a revolution of our own.

I will commence by asking the question is Helpdesk a career?.

YES for the Helpdesk Professional

but at present it is very well hidden. I was recently looking for staff for a customer who wanted to create a centre of excellence from a Helpdesk viewpoint. On receiving CV's I was inundated with Technical Support Analysts who were "happy to work on a helpdesk" very nice of them, but I was looking for people with vision in how this centre would be achieved. I was also looking for trainee consultants for my own business with a prerequisite of 5 years experience in Helpdesk and a vision for the future. It has taken 6 months and a lot of searching to find my candidate. The reason for this – most helpdesk staff feel that the only way forward is on a technical footing into Support or Development. In fact there are a number of high profile desks that reward conscientious, hardworking effective helpdesk staff by paying for technical qualifications which can really only be utilised by moving into a technical environment.

Few people realise that they can become individual members of HDI (previously CSM) and receive the benefits currently afforded by organisation i.e. a networking forum for Helpdesk Professionals which offers invaluable advice, industry updates and courses/training for career progression.

Helpdesk Analysts need to rise up and become counted as the company assets that they really are by showing employers the benefit of good Helpdesk Staff. Helpdesk Management need to be careful not to become a self fulfilling prophecy by not providing careers to retain valued Helpdesk staff in the field of Service Provision.

I will sign off for now but look forward to hearing your views and ideas on how the revolution should evolve. Please email your comments/ideas to admin@magicale.com

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